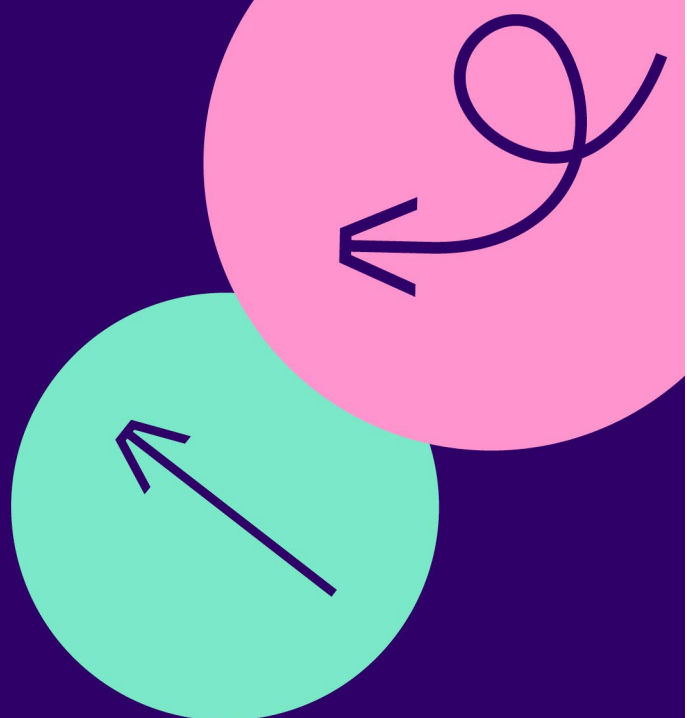


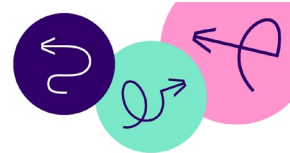


Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Approved: 27th August 2025

By: Executive Committee

Review date: 27th August 2028 – 3 years



1. Purpose

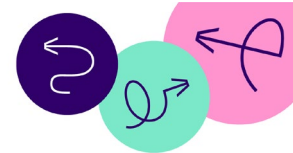
- 1.1 The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy is designed to ensure that Hft is a diverse and inclusive organisation, where all people we support and all colleagues feel valued, respected with a sense of belonging. Everyone should be free of discrimination, harassment, bullying and treated with dignity and respect.
- 1.2 This policy ensures that colleagues and volunteers do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination and meet our regulatory requirements e.g., Equality Act 2010, Care Quality Commission.
- 1.3 The policy provides a broad framework under which all of us at Hft should be operating within. It doesn't exhaustively cover all aspects of EDI, and Hft reserves the right to apply reasonable discretion and interpretation of the scope of this policy when considering individual circumstances.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to everyone at Hft. This includes established colleagues; relief and casual colleagues; agency staff; contractors; volunteers; Trustees; people we support and their families; and anyone else we come into contact within our roles at Hft.

3. Policy statement

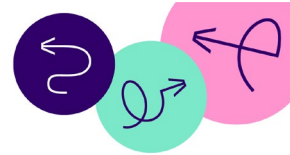
- 3.1 At Hft we're committed to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in everything we do. The people we support, colleagues, trustees, volunteers, agency workers and partners from other agencies come from all walks of life. We draw upon the differences in who we are, what we've experienced and how we think to support learning disabled adults and all those we work with to live their best life.



- 3.2 We stand against discrimination and prejudice, and we champion tolerance, fairness and equity in everything we do. This makes us stronger and helps us reach more people.
- 3.3 We're working to become a more diverse employer, which means making our workforce as representative of people across the UK as we can. We know that a diverse workforce can bring a whole range of ideas and perspectives that help us improve and meet the needs of the people we support.
- 3.4 We commit to ensuring all our colleagues, people we support and anyone who works with or for us, will be treated fairly and with respect.

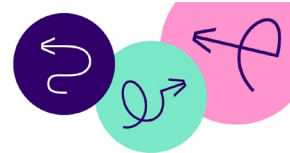
4. Definitions

- 4.1 **Equity** recognises that simply giving everyone the same opportunity will not enable equal outcomes. Equity is about giving people what they need as an individual for fair access and removing inequalities to ensure everyone has the opportunity to realise their goals.
- 4.2 **Diversity** is the range of people in an organisation or profession. For example, this means people of different ages, ethnicities, genders, religions, sexualities and people with disabilities. Having a diverse workforce enables us to consider more points of view and lived experience to make better decisions and reflect the communities we serve.
- 4.3 **Inclusion** means being proactive to make sure that people of different backgrounds, experiences and identities feel welcomed, respected and fully able to participate. It means the thoughts, contributions, presence and perspectives of different people are actively valued and integrated into the working environment, empowered to collaborate. This allows everybody to perform at their highest level.



5. Types of discrimination

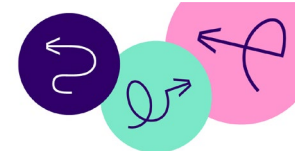
- 5.1 This section sets out key types of discrimination and inappropriate behaviour. These could be carried out by a group or an individual. They might take place once or be repeated behaviour.
- 5.2 **Protected characteristics** are the legally defined grounds that employees could be discriminated against as defined in the Equality Act 2010. They are:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Sex
 - Gender reassignment
 - Sexual orientation
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
- 5.3 **Direct discrimination** is when an individual is treated less favourably than another in the same circumstances because of a characteristic of their identity.
- 5.4 **Associative discrimination** is the mistreatment or harassment of an individual because of their close association with someone who possesses a protected characteristic.
- 5.5 **Discrimination by perception** is the mistreatment or harassment of an individual who is believed to possess a particular protected characteristic.
- 5.6 **Indirect discrimination** is discrimination due to the way something affects a certain group of people with a certain characteristic where this was not the intended aim.
- 5.7 **Victimisation** occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because they have complained about an incident(s) of discrimination or supported someone else who has made a complaint.



- 5.8 **Harassment** is behaviour that is unwelcome or unacceptable and results in the creation of a stressful or intimidating environment for the recipient(s). It can include verbal abuse, racist or offensive jokes, insensitive comments, leering, physical contact, unwanted sexual advances, ridicule or isolation.
- 5.9 **Harassment by a third party** is behaviour that individuals find offensive, but where they are not the direct recipient of the behaviour.
- 5.10 **Bullying** is unacceptable, offensive behaviour. It can be defined as unfair treatment, excessive criticism, or persistent criticism over minor things, intimidating, aggressive or undermining behaviour, that results in the recipient(s) feeling upset, humiliated, threatened or vulnerable, undermining their self-confidence and integrity.
- 5.11 **Intimidation** is the action of frightening or threatening someone to persuade them to do something they are not willing to do.
- 5.12 **Microaggressions** are verbal, behavioural and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative slights, invalidations and insults to an individual or group because of their marginalised status in society.

6. Duty to make reasonable adjustments

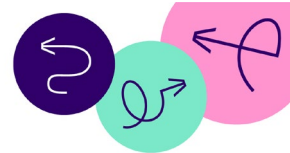
- 6.1 Where a policy or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, reasonable adjustments must be made to avoid the disadvantage.
- 6.2 Where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled, reasonable adjustments must be made to avoid the disadvantage.



- 6.3 Where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled, reasonable adjustments must be made to avoid the disadvantage. In addition, where requirements relate to the provision of information, reasonable adjustments include ensuring that the information is available in an accessible format.

7. Guiding Principles

- 7.1 Hft is committed to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion. We commit to educate and support our colleagues to understand and value EDI as part of their work. We provide guidance and education to enable everyone who works with or for us to follow anti-discrimination legislation.
- 7.2 We also recognise our commitments under the Equality Act 2010 and good practice as recommended by the Equality & Human Rights Commission, ACAS, the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) and other advisory bodies. This is the minimum. But we strive to continuously go beyond this.
- 7.3 We regularly monitor our activities and will take appropriate steps if we believe our policy is not being effectively delivered. As part of this, we outline key areas of focus and accountability and monitor and evaluate our performance.
- 7.4 We have a zero-tolerance policy to any form of bullying, harassment and racism, and we take appropriate action if anyone working with or for us demonstrates inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour. We also tackle negative and discriminatory comments on our external platforms, and we monitor responses to our social posts and take appropriate action to address any discriminatory comments – including blocking, deleting, correcting and challenging as appropriate to the situation.

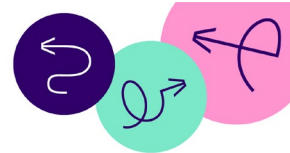


8. Our non-negotiables

- 8.1 We are committed to a workplace free from intimidation, bullying, harassment and discrimination, and actively promote a culture where colleagues, volunteers and people we support are treated with respect and dignity.
- 8.2 Our policies and practices are not discriminatory.
- 8.3 We follow equal opportunities legislation and codes of practice.
- 8.4 Employees, volunteers including trustees and anyone working on our behalf understand their individual responsibilities and our responsibilities as an employer.
- 8.5 We recognise the value of a diverse workforce and work to ensure our organisation is representative of the people we support and the communities we work in.

9. How do we further our commitment to EDI?

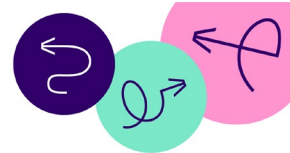
- 9.1 Our commitment as an organisation is shown through:
 - Our Strategy and our Strategic Objectives
 - Our EDI policy
 - Our code of conduct and values and behaviours
- 9.2 We are committed to listening to our colleagues via:
 - Issues or concerns raised directly with Hft by individuals
 - Our Partnership Forum
 - Our Colleague Inclusion Group
 - Conducting regular colleague surveys and engagement exercises
- 9.3 Supporting individuals' wellbeing and encouraging a good work/life balance with flexible and hybrid working practices.
- 9.4 Our commitment to ongoing training and development for all colleagues.



- 9.5 Our commitment to continuous improvement and following best practice.
- 9.6 Developing and monitoring annual KPIs.
- 9.7 Prioritising the collection of our colleague EDI data.
- 9.8 Our commitments help us provide a positive, friendly working environment, where colleagues, volunteers and contractors are respected and valued for their uniqueness and their differences, as well as being treated and rewarded fairly.

10. Raising concerns

- 10.1 We want people to be as open as they can be about any issues, however minor, so we can ensure everyone is treated with respect and dignity. We take any type of discrimination, bullying, harassment or any other breaches of this policy seriously and we act when we need to.
- 10.2 Grievances and complaints will be dealt with in confidence, as far as possible, and will not prejudice a colleague's current employment status or future career prospects, or our relationship with external contractors or volunteers.
- 10.3 Hft recognise that some groups in our workforce may not always feel able to speak up, or may wish to remain anonymous. Our whistleblowing policy shares how you can speak up can raise concerns, whichever part of the organisation you work in.
- 10.4 There are separate procedures for people we support, families, other professionals and contractors/suppliers to make a complaint through our complaint's procedure.



11. Responsibilities and accountabilities

11.1 Individual responsibilities

We all have a responsibility to behave in a way that supports our **code of conduct** and brings to life our values, both inside and outside of work.

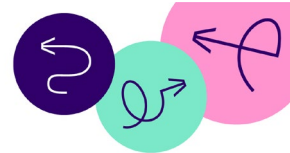
We also have a responsibility to:

- Be aware of the 2010 Equality Act and what it means for us
- Co-operate with initiatives to promote diversity and equal opportunities, including completing relevant training
- Understand the values and principles of equality and diversity
- Not discriminate against, abuse, harass, victimise or intimidate others, and report this behaviour to a manager or senior leader when we see it
- Show an understanding of each other's needs and treat each other with respect
- Take the time to listen and talk to each other to understand each person's value and contribution
- Respect each other's differences, considering the effects of our behaviour and actions on others

11.2 Manager Responsibilities

In addition, people managers have a responsibility to:

- Role model positive behaviours, leading by example
- Make sure team members feel safe, supported and able to discuss issues, including being familiar with this policy and other relevant guidance
- Use inclusive and non-judgmental language with team members, sensitively recognising that each person's experience may differ
- Ensure proper records of employment conversations and decisions are made
- Ensure any grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent way and in line with our Grievance Policy
- Ensure their team members complete diversity training and are aware of their legal responsibilities
- Be open to facilitating ways to support individuals effectively
- Proactively seek additional guidance from the People Operations Team
- Take the time to continually learn about and celebrate diversity in their team to ensure they are creating a culture of inclusion



12. Reporting

- 12.1 Reports are produced by the People Team for the Executive Team and People Committee on the makeup of our workforce and recruitment activity.
- 12.2 Further details of progress on EDI is provided in an annual report on EDI to the Board of Trustees. These will be used to recommend actions where improvements may be required.
- 12.3 All information collected for monitoring purposes will remain confidential to the People Team.
- 12.4 Hft complies with its responsibilities for Gender Pay Gap reporting.

Relevant legislation and guidance

Equality Act

Gender Pay Gap Reporting

Relevant Hft policies

[Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination](#)

[Anti-Sexual Harassment](#)

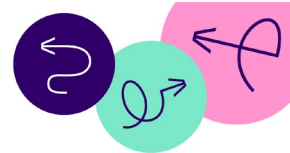
[Code of Conduct](#)

[Whistleblowing Policy July 2024 \(Approved\)](#)

[Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure.pdf](#)

[Hft-Quality-And Improvement-Feedback Policy Compliments and Complaints v1.3 Final](#)

[Data_Protection_Policy.pdf](#)



Policy details

Version: New policy

Policy Author: Chief People and Culture Officer

Executive Lead: Chief People and Culture Officer